

10947 K. Paulinus, Pres.

A

LETTER

TO THE

PEOPLE

OF

ENGLAND;

Occasion'd by the Falling away of the
CLERGY, from the Doctrines of the
REFORMATION.

*That ye should earnestly contend for the
Faith, which was once delivered unto the
Saints, Jude ver. 3.*

THE SECOND EDITION.

L O N D O N,

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A
L E T T E R
T O T H E

People of *England*, &c.

Gentlemen and Brethren,



T ought to be some Point of great Importance, that can sufficiently justify so general an Address as *this*, which is laid before you. You will say, likewise, an Author should seriously weigh the Liberty he takes upon him of presuming to impeach the

present State of doctrinal Preaching in the Church. These Things *have* been well consider'd.

Since the Rights, or rather the Necessities of Mankind, in the Affair of Salvation, do call for some *Remark* on this Head ; and nothing ought to deter either *You* or *Me*, from entertaining and advancing Truth ; I shall endeavour to *execute* what I have judg'd necessary on the present Occasion, with the strictest Impartiality and Justice.

That the Cause of Religion has declined for many Years, every Person appears sensible. Amongst the various Reasons assign'd for it, I happen to think, many *false* Ones have been started, but the *principal*

pal Reason not yet hit upon. In my Apprehension, the establish'd Ministers have suffer'd the Cause to *die* in their *own* Hands : By departing from the *Old Method* of Preaching, for the sake of a dangerous Politeness ; and further, by departing from their first and original Tenets ; which has given Countenance to what is called Natural Religion, in *such* a Measure, as to shut out Reveal'd Religion, and *supersede* the GOSPEL.

It will be found, by a diligent Observer, that there are not only *Fashions* of the World, but it may be seen there have been *Fashions* of Religion, unhappily led up by those Persons, who should be supposed, in this Point, never to vary.

Reli-

Religion, from several Incidents which I shall touch upon in these Papers, is become a *new* Thing. It is in vain to cry out against Deists and Infidels, when the Protestant Watchmen have deserted their Post, and themselves have open'd the Gap to the Enemy.

This Consequence could not but follow, and, I dare say, was discern'd by serious Persons a Century ago, when Ministers take upon them to leave the *Bible*, and, rather than with that, are delighted in the curious Fields of Learning, Oratory, Pomp, and Power. Learning and Oratory, it must be own'd, are arriv'd at great Perfection; but our true *Old Divinity* is gone. Amidst these splendid
Trifles,

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Trifles, the GOSPEL is *really* lost. I shall set this Matter in a full Light, by opening *two* material Articles.

First, The Method of obtaining Heaven. And,

Secondly, Man's Power in himself, or not Power, to be virtuous.

It was an universal Belief amongst Protestants at the Reformation, and the Pulpit knew no other Language, that *Faith only* is the genuine Method of Salvation: Not *Faith and Works together*, or Works *more properly*, as hath been held forth within seventy or eighty Years last past. This latter Way, indeed, is no Way at all; rightly
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consider'd, it carries with it a Contradiction to it self. For if Works are join'd to Faith, not as Proofs of Faith, but as Means together, or rather the principal Means of Salvation, as now our Pulpits do almost universally represent; the Matter is resolv'd finally into Works *merely*, and *not* Faith. This Notion, in Effect, excludes Christ. There cannot be a mix'd Way to Acceptance: It must be by Christ *wholly*, or our selves *wholly*; not our selves in Part, and Christ in Part, with a View to make up our Defects. Indeed, such a Notion carries a plausible Appearance at first View; but the Truth is a Stranger to it: The Reformation discern'd better; and the Scripture, where it principally treats this Subject, I mean

mean St. *Paul's* Epistles, declares otherwise. *If by Grace* (that is, by God's free Favour through Christ, Election to Life arises) *then is it no more of Works ; otherwise Grace is no more Grace. But if it be of Works, then is it no more Grace ; otherwise Work is no more Work.*

The *Place* of Works in a Christian Man's Salvation, is, that they are *Marks* and *Proofs* of Faith. They are Signs of Justification ; not the *Cause* or *Motive* of Justification, in any Measure. Christ's Works, which alone were perfect in their Kind, are, with God, that Motive entirely. Morality, and Piety of Conversation, may, and ought to be recommended in Ser-

B mons,

mons, as whereby a Christian should demonstrate his Faith ; but, at present, they are generally recommended upon a different Foot. Mankind are led to understand, and apprehend, that they are principally to be sav'd by Repentance, and other moral Endeavours. These Things are good ; but in a wrong View they are ruinous. A View undesign'd by the new Dispensation. This is not to preach the GOSPEL. It is *Moses* still, the Rod of the Moral Law, still held over Men ; which, in the End, can do no other than condemn. This may be called a bringing back the old Dispensation, a reviving Sin and Misery, provided Persons go to the Issue of the Argument. Whereas, *Christ was the*
End

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End of the Law, the complete Filler of it, *for Righteousness to them who believe*. No Man contributes, properly the *least Grain* to his own Salvation.

If we read *Luther's Sermons*, *Calvin's Institutions*, or any of the old Doctors of the Reformation, we find *such* their invariable Language. This Language yielded real Incouragement to an Audience: It convey'd no confus'd, but a distinct Idea. In brief; this renders Salvation a practicable Matter, which modern Preaching makes a Thing impracticable. The Nature of our Case calls for so much, we *owe* so much to the Glory of the GOSPEL.

I know the Precaution of the Pulpit raises many *Objections* against such a Language: But it is not for Man to form Schemes of Salvation. Scripture certainly is *wisest*, and generally Antiquity is *wiser* than modern Times, in *these* Matters.

There appear to me many Reasons why *Faith only* can obtain Salvation. Some I will mention. God is *pure beyond* all Imagination or Thought. The best Livers are *imperfect* in their *best* Performances. The Messiah, by his personal Virtue, *fulfilled* the moral Law *perfectly*, instead of *fallen*, and still *corrupted* Man. By a Cloathing form'd out of his Righteousness,
 Man

Man *may* be saved *indeed*. Now upon *this* Prospect, human Nature receives proper Incouragement, and exerts readily its moral Endeavours upon a Foot of Gratitude, upon a Foot of Thankfulness, upon a Foot of glorifying God before Men. The Salvation of a Christian is *already* effected, is *already* finish'd, if at all, by Jesus Christ, even before Mens Works were wrought, or themselves born into the World.

This Assertion may sound oddly at present (there having been a *Disuse* of such Doctrines, and *contrary* Notions, now introduced, for many Years) but the Church Articles hold out *this* Sense: And, perhaps, in some future Time, it
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may become customary, and acceptable again.

Who would imagine, if he only hears Discourses in the CHURCH of *England*, and takes the Matter implicitly, that there is *some Article* constantly in the Common Prayer Book, *expresly contrary* to what engages the Person in the Pulpit? Who would imagine (I am sorry to say these Things) that many Clergymen *subscribe* to the *Thirty Nine* Articles, and profess to *believe* them before the People, at Admission into a Living, yet *secretly disbelieve* the very Chief of them, and preach *against* them all their Lives? I call that disbelieving, when Persons deny a genuine and obvious Sense. A Case
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which affords no *large Proof* of that *Integrity* and *Honesty*, which ought to be expected at *such Hands*. A *Case* which merits to be consider'd, and which may justly teach the *Laity* *Precaution* and *Care*, in a *View* which so highly concerns them.

*The eleventh Article of the Church
of England.*

Of the Justification of Man.

We are accounted righteous before God, only for the Merit of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, by Faith, and not for our own Works or Deservings. Wherefore, that we are justified by Faith only, is a most wholesome Doctrine, and very full of Com-

*Comfort, as more largely is expressed
in the Homily of Justification.*

It appears hence, that Faith and Works together, and with some Preachers Works only; as now a-days generally urged, is a remarkable *Variation* from the supposed *Standard* of Doctrine. The Method of urging Salvation upon the modern Foot, is vain and delusive. The other will bear the Test, and yields Satisfaction to the intelligent and serious Christian.

It is observable, in the *same* Sense with this eleventh Article, are most of the *old Books* which filled the Press an hundred and fifty Years after the Reformation.
Of

Of this Kind are several large *Folio's* (though defaced and neglected) still appearing in our Parish Churches. These Monuments of Truth, and Antiquity, for the most Part are, *Fox's Martyrology*, in three Volumes, Bishop *Jewel's Apology*, *Erasmus's Paraphrase* on the *New Testament*: These, with the Book of *Homilies* [which, by the Way, are excellent Compositions] are all upon the Plan, and in the Sense I am here reasoning for the Revival of. In my humble Opinion, till the Use, at least the Sense of these Writings, is restor'd, there will be no *substantial* Preaching, nor *real* Morality, either amongst *Clergy* or *Laity*.

The *Second* material Point I shall instance, wherein the Clergy have fallen away, both from the Doctors of the Reformation, and *their own* Articles, is, the ascribing to Man a *Power* of being virtuous, by the *Strength* of his own *Reason* and *Free-Will*.

Luther, Calvin, and most Part of the Doctors, who had the Province of Writing and Preaching, at, and presently after, the Reformation, declared entirely against such Power: So *does* the Article I shall now subjoin.

The

The tenth Article of the CHURCH
of England.

Of Free-Will.

The Condition of Man after the Fall of Adam, is such, that he cannot turn and prepare himself by his own natural Strength, and good Works, to Faith and calling upon God: Wherefore we have no Power to do good Works, pleasant and acceptable to God without the Grace of God by Christ preventing us, that we may have a good Will, and working with us when we have that good Will.

It is observable, since the Time of *Archbishop Laud*, the Clergy have taken up a *different* Language. From their Manner of speaking

on this Subject (I always mean as to the Main, and Drift of it) an Audience is led to apprehend, that every Person *may* be converted, and *come* into Belief, and into Virtue, by the Use of his Faculties and Reason: By which *Representation*, the Doctrine of *supernatural Assistance* has been exploded, and is look'd upon as little better than Cant and Enthufiasm. Indeed, under this artful Term, most of the old Doctrines have suffer'd, and been obliged to betake themselves into *Corners* and *Obscurity*: Yet, in my humble Opinion, there can be no other *real* Foundation of true Religion. For, if human Nature, by virtue of Free-Will (which no Protestant ever deny'd, so far as it can go) has an Ability,

or

or *Possibility*, of believing, and of being virtuous, let the Upholders of the new System render a Reason why Mankind is not more believing, and more virtuous than in Fact *we find* them to be. In Case it be here said, some Persons will not use Reason, I ask again, must there not be a Cause of this unhappy Turn in the Mind? Must not the Cause be some *secret Corruption* in the *Condition* of Nature?

Most Persons do think, indeed, that they have Strength to Knowledge, and to Practice, when they *please* to exert it: Alas! a Piece of Self-Flattery, which proceeds from this *very* Corruption, and is a *Part* of it. I apprehend, according to
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the present Condition of Nature, we may affirm, that it hath Freedom to *some Degree*, but not to *such* a Degree as to reach real Virtue, and true Light, without a *new* and *extraordinary* Assistance. It has Freedom enough to condemn it, for Folly and Immorality; but not so much as whereby to render it self *acceptable* to the supreme Being. We have all a Will that is *free*, but not a Will that is *good*.

A Neglect of this Consideration has render'd *modern Sermons* of a Kind with the Lectures of *Seneca*, or *Epicetus*. They are moral Essays, and that without real Foundation. Here we may justly date that Passion for *Natural Religion*

gion which has amus'd the World of late Years. 'Tis true, the Clergy, though they allow and hold this Notion, yet they join Reveal'd Religion with it. Herein, as seems to me, lies a *great Error*, just the *Error* which I before mention'd, of holding Faith and Works together. If natural Religion exists, which the Clergy do evidently allow, will it not follow, according to the Deists, that Reveal'd Religion is a Matter *unnecessary*? If Reveal'd Religion is *unnecessary*, as it must be, if the other is *possibly sufficient*, I own I cannot well see how the all-wise Being, who does nothing in vain, can be suppos'd to have made it. So that in Case Deism is the *Crime* of the Age, it involves not the C——ns's, the T——ls only, but
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the Consequence unexpectedly reaches *much farther*: Nay, the Former are more consistent in their Pretensions, than some other Persons. In my humble Opinion, the Clergy are palpably in the wrong, in holding *two* Pretensions, which mutually *overthrow* one another. I cannot but think, that Natural Religion ought absolutely to be deny'd. Yet, far be it from us to cramp the divine Mercy, or Favour. In Heathen Countries, and under States where the GOSPEL never reach'd, the supreme Being *can* communicate the supernatural Assistance, of which I am speaking, if he pleases, to *particular* Men.

Against

Against any Power of this Kind in Nature, the *Scripture*, as well as the Article I have quoted, appears exprefs. *The natural Man discerneth not the Things which be of God. Except a Man be born again, he cannot see the Kingdom of God ; that is, he cannot be a real Member of the Church of CHRIST here, nor an Inheritor of that Happinefs which will be hereafter. No Man can come to me, except the Father who hath sent me draw him.*

Towards making and forming a Christian, if *supernatural Assistance* of the divine Spirit *was* neceffary at the Beginning of the GOSPEL, I do not fee what fhould render it *lefs* neceffary at any Time fince ;

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nor why it may not be *expected now*, but that Persons want Faith. Human Learning, and human Wisdom, have rashly and vainly usurped the *Place* of it.

It is observable, these *Old Principles* are still to be found amongst Dissenters, in a good Measure ; which, I fear, may be Part of the Reason why the *Clergy* have dropt the Use of them.

In regard these Doctrines were the Principles and Language of the *Dissenters*, and others, who follow'd the Standard of the Parliament against King CHARLES the First ; though they were not the particular Motives of the War, nor could contract any just Blame from

from the unhappy Issue of that War; yet, at the *Restoration* of King *Charles* the Second, the Resentment, which took Place against the Persons of the *Dissenters*, and ran high, I apprehend, led the Church *Clergy*, not only to be angry with the *Men*, but to forsake their *Principles* too, though right and innocent in themselves, and afore-time held in common amongst all Protestants. This appears, in my Opinion, the Beginning of Natural Religion, and Moral Preaching. Every Thing besides began to be *branded* with the odious Term of *Enthusiasm*, and *Hypocrisy*. Hence Mankind lost Sight of former Principles; and a *new Plan* of Preaching found Applause, from that Time to the

present. This total Change in the Language of Preaching, no Doubt, cannot bear a just Vindication. It was a running into *Extremes*, which 'tis high Time to rectify and adjust. I am not here insinuating any Apology for Principles which tend to Resistance of the supreme Power; only for the *Revival* of *such* Principles which are essentially Protestant, and uncontestable.

The unhappy Mistake, which *Naturalists* fell into, has, by Degrees, affected the *Taste* of Mankind. All Manner of *old* Writings are *now* disdain'd, The Sermons of *Luther*, the Sermons of *Latimer* and *Ridley*, would, at present, find little quarter amongst us. Yet such Discourses have the only real
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Recommendations to Esteem; they are founded in *Truth*, and have *good Sense* at the Bottom.

Perhaps nothing but Use and Custom renders the various Manner of Persons Writings either displeasing to us, or pleasing. In any Kind of Philosophy give me a *new* Writer, in Religion give me an *old* Writer. In this Case, *no Man having drank old Wine, straightway desireth new; for he saith, the old is better.* Experience declares against modern Divinity: That is, it has no proper *Substance* in it, to *influence* the Actions of Mankind. 'Tis impossible it should. It *wants* Power, it *wants* the indispensable Assistance and Strength of the *Holy Scripture*. If I am not mistaken, *Luther*

ther was wont to wish there was no Book in the World beside the *Bible*. Perhaps many Persons begin to be of the *same Opinion*.

Happy would it be for the Protestant World, would all Men hold their grand Principles *consistently*. The Reformers declar'd the Scriptures a *sufficient Rule* of Faith, and Manners; and yet, how *largely* have after Times taken upon them to *add*! how unaccountably, if we observe seriously the *Bulk* of some national Establishments! But be this as it may be: Doubtless the *Ministers* of our Establishment ought not to hold the Parts of that Establishment *fast and loose*. This will admit no Apology. If the Church *be* a Congregation
of

of faithful Men) as our Establishment affirms) *where the pure Word of God is preach'd, &c.* Let the pure Word *be* preach'd: Otherwise, according to Acknowledgment, it is *not a Church.*

I do not say the *Clergy* have advanced any Branches of *Popish* Corruption. *Popery* seems not now the Danger, let Reverend Politicians give themselves what *Airs* they please, our Danger is, *no real Religion* at all.

In the mean Time, since a *Famine of the Word*, as the Prophet expresses it, prevails in the Land, every private Christian has a Right, and, I am sorry to say so, has a Necessity, in my Apprehension, to
seek

seek his Bread in desolate Places.
 The Laity has a Right to hear the Truth, and, instead of vain and barren Amusement, to reap true Edification and Knowledge, *Wherever they can find it.*

The same Rule will hold in any *future* Time, should Corruption, as to Fundamentals, ever happen again. Suffer in your selves no ridiculous Terrors, or false Notions about *Church Communion*. All real Christians, go where they will, are of *one* Communion.

The *Christian* Church does not properly consist of Persons, form'd under this or that Model of Worship; but of *particular* Persons, out of *infinite* Churches. If the
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Doctrines of the Reformation had been follow'd in all their just Consequences, there would have been no *Term of Communion* except the *Scripture*. But be this at it may be.

In case you have no Opportunity of hearing the genuine GOSPEL, 'tis my sincere Opinion, you had better tarry at home, and read a Chapter in the *Bible*, than be *beguiled* with tinkling Sounds, and plausible Absurdities. *What is the Chaff to the Wheat?* It avails not to be fed with Chaff, even out of a Dish of Gold.

I would not here insinuate, or mean, that every Lay-man ought to leave his Church, *directly* or ab-
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solutely,

solutely, but that it may be expedient for him to leave it in Part, *or for an Hour, it may be*, with a View to necessary Edification. If CHRIST be preach'd, it matters not where. If in the *Church*, 'tis well; if in the *Meetings*, 'tis well; but that he *be* preach'd, and fully known, seems, in my Opinion, the *great Point needful*. Every Person is to do as he is persuaded in his own Mind.

I generally think most Men too much attached to a single Communion, through the Force of Education and Custom. If every Party would *relax* somewhat in this Point, perhaps it would be *better*.

With

With Regard to the Affair of Communion, I shall relate a Particular of *Grotius*. When that wise and judicious Person lay upon his Death-Bed, a Crowd of Company who stood by, was solicitous to know, from his own Mouth, what *Communion* he might be said to die in : Each of them secretly hoping some signal Advantage to their Party, from the Credit of so eminent a Member, on whose side soever he should happen to declare. All the Answer *Grotius* thought fit to return, was, that *he should die in the Communion of JESUS CHRIST.*

Ecclesiastical Persons may multiply the heads of Christian Belief in Church *Creeds* (for there is scarcely any end of enumerating Gospel

Gospel Truths) to as great Number as they please, still the principal Point will be, to *believe in CHRIST* for *Justification*. Keep this in Sight. The Gospel does not appear to me, so much a Mystery in any respect, as that it may be justly esteemed a Mystery of *Compassion* and *Beneficence* in the World's Sovereign Creator.

In Case a *Christian's* Faith be the Effect of divine Assistance, and not the Effect of human Art, or of Education, or Custom, it will have a *Fruit* attending it, of *Piety*, and *Sobriety* in Life. No *Christian* can have a License to sin. 'Tis a sufficient Happiness to him, that Faith fully understood, gives his religious Performances a comfortable

able Foundation to go upon; and that such a Person's Duties in Life proceed henceforward, not with Uncertainty and Doubt, but with Chearfulness and Satisfaction.

In order to so clear a Discernment of Things, it seems necessary, that all persons amongst us, as well Laymen as Ministers, should be conversant in the Scripture, and *search* every Page with their *own Eyes*. Few Persons come to real Religion by *Hearsay*.

'Tis high Time you enquire after the *Old Way*. Have Recourse to *Old Books* in all religious Matters, and especially to the *Holy Scriptures*.

I hope I have at least open'd a Door this Way. Experience declares against every other Scheme. *What* have they brought forth? A false Taste in the present Age, with respect to Wit or Learning, may be tolerably conniv'd at; a false Taste in Religion must not be conniv'd at, it requires to be *remedied* by having Recourse to *first* Principles. This hath seem'd to me the *only* Method of *restoring* Religion.

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I cannot conclude better than with the Words of the Apostle Jude, *It was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you, that ye should earnestly contend for the Faith, which was once deliver'd unto the Saints:* That is to say, in the
Time,

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Time, and at the Forming of the first *Churches*; and, give me Leave to *immind* you, was *again* deliver'd to the Protestant World, at the important Time of the Reformation.

I am,

Gentlemen and Brethren,

Your Faithful

Humble Servant,

PAULINUS.

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